

PENN
BOARD REPORT
CAMBRIA

Volume 46 No. 9

April 2025

This report summarizes the actions taken by the Penn Cambria Board of Education at its regular meeting, April 15, 2025. Routine business, such as approval of agenda, minutes, treasurer's report, financial reports, and payment of bills was accomplished. The Board also took the following actions and approved the following resolutions:

I. SPOTLIGHT ON ACHIEVEMENT

Congratulations to the following Penn Cambria students who competed at the state *SkillsUSA* competition:

First place winners and competing at nationals in Atlanta, GA:

Automated Manufacturing Technology - Gabriel Barnish, Troy Logan, and Alex Walters

Second place winner:

Electrical Construction Wiring - Blake Miller

II. HEARING OF VISITORS – There were no questions, concerns, comments related to school business.

III. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

VISION INSURANCE PROGRAM

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors approve a two-year agreement effective July 1, 2025 with *Vision Benefits of America* to provide vision insurance coverage for all eligible employees. This benefit plan will continue to be administered in compliance with all employment agreements.

IV. MOU WITH PENN CAMBRIA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

RESOLVED: That Board of Directors approve a Memorandum of Understanding between Penn Cambria School District and the Penn Cambria Education Association, to fill a special education teacher position for the 2025-2026 school year with a long term substitute.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent's recommendations be approved as follows:

A. PERSONNEL ACTIONS

1. Accept resignations
 - a. Nate Erzal, Volunteer Football Coach, retroactive to March 17, 2025
 - b. Danielle Lingenfelter, Food Service Worker, effective May 29, 2025
 - c. Lindsey Sease, Aide, retroactive to April 4, 2025
2. Remove substitutes, effective immediately
 - a. Christina Dorsch, Lilly, Substitute Aide/Secretary
 - b. Brooke Litzinger, Johnstown, Substitute Teacher
 - c. Alyssa Martinazzi, Cresson, IU08 Substitute Teacher
 - d. Josalyn Miller, Duncansville, IU08 Substitute Teacher
3. Approve Admiral Peary Area Vocational Technical School Student Co-op
 - a. Jacey Karlheim, Loretto, retroactive to March 26, 2025
4. Approve Tyler Mosorjak, Indiana, Middle School Special Education Long-Term Substitute Teacher, effective with the start of the 2025-2026 school year, pending documentation
5. Approve Jason Grassi, Altoona, Head Varsity Football Coach, at a stipend of \$6,498, effective immediately
6. Approve appointments, effective pending documentation
 - a. Prospective Teacher Substitutes
 - i. Olivia Brocklehurst, Warren, for Maria Zelenski
 - ii. Maya Capozzoli, Camp Hill, for Kayla Michael

- iii. Hope Kephart, Portage, for Kirstie Barto
 - b. IU08 Substitute Teachers
 - i. James Penna, Johnstown
 - ii. Kelly Zibura, Johnstown
 - c. Olivia Brocklehurst, Warren, Substitute Teacher
- B. SET GRADUATION LOCATION, DATE, AND TIME
Graduation will be held at the Maurice Stokes Athletic Center/DeGol Arena on the campus of Saint Francis University on Saturday, May 31, 2025 at 1:00 PM
- C. APPROVE DELETIONS TO THE PCSD NOVEL LIST
- D. APPROVE THE REVISED 2024-2025 SCHOOL CALENDAR

VI. NEW BUSINESS

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors approve the Special Education Plan for 2025-2026 through 2027-2028 school years, pending the twenty-eight day review ending on April 21, 2025.

2025-2026 BUDGET FOR ADMIRAL PEARY AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors approve the 2025-2026 budget as presented and endorsed by the Superintendent's Advisory Committee and the Joint Operating Committee of Admiral Peary Area Vocational-Technical School.

SUBSTITUTE SERVICES

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors approve Penn Cambria School District participation with the Appalachia Intermediate Unit 08 to provide emergency substitute services to the Penn Cambria School District for a fee of \$500 for the 2025-2026 school year.

OUT OF STATE CONFERENCE

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors approve one student, along with their parent, to attend the National Forensics Competition in Chicago, Illinois on May 24, 2025, registration costs to be paid by the district.

BID AWARD - CAFETERIA EQUIPMENT

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors award the bid for the purchase of a gas Combi Oven and related installation to Gerald Sherry & Associates, Inc. at a cost not to exceed \$42,753.

IU08 PRESCHOOL CLASS

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors approve renewal of lease for classroom space for the Appalachia Intermediate Unit 08 Preschool Class at Penn Cambria Intermediate School for the 2025-2026 school year at the annual sum of \$4,500.

NATURAL GAS SUPPLY AGREEMENT

RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors approve the 24-month BASIS renewal with Snyder Brothers for Natural Gas at NYMEX Settlement minus \$0.291/Dth, which is a reduction of \$0.419/Dth from the previous contract.

SECOND READING AND ADOPTION OF NEW, REVISED, OR BOARD POLICIES FOR REVIEW:

- A. 005 - Organization
- B. 323 - Tobacco and Vaping Products
- C. 351 - Controlled Substances
- D. 707 - Use of School Facilities
- E. 805 - Emergency Preparedness and Response
- F. 806 - Child Abuse
- G. 904 - Attendance at School Events

VII. FIRST READING OF NEW, REVISED, OR BOARD POLICIES FOR REVIEW:

- A. 103 - Discrimination/Harassment Affecting Students
- B. 103.1 - Attachments
- C. 104 - Discrimination/Harassment Affecting Staff

- D. 234 - Pregnant/Parenting/Married Students
- E. 308 - Employment Contract/Board Resolution
- F. 903 - Public Participation in Board Meetings
- G. 909 - Municipal Government
- H. 920 - School-Related Groups - Boosters/Organization/Clubs

VIII. INFORMATIONAL ITEM

Jaime Hartline, Superintendent, gave a presentation that included a slideshow of an Athletic Facilities Master Plan that was donated by Core Architects.

“This is a grand master plan that could take five or even thirty years to complete. Just because it is presented does not mean that it is going to happen. However, one thing that I do believe is that any successful entrepreneur, organization, or facility all start with a vision and that is exactly what we are doing here. It is not a commitment to spend school district funds, it is simply something that we have to work forward to.”

The slideshow included views of a new facilities garage; upgrades to the parking lot and roadway from the Pre-Primary to 4th Street; a field house with locker rooms and a training room; a concrete plaza; an amenity building that included a concession stand, restrooms, and ticketing; and a track with room for the jumping carriers.

Mr. Hartline noted that “softball and baseball fields are to come later down the road. The goal was to get this area addressed immediately.”

After sharing more views of the plan, Mr. Hartline stated that “the cost for a project like this one would be about \$10 million dollars. There is no way that the school district could pull that off. However, if you chip away at it, then you will need to use a phased approach.

Phase one: Already built into the current project including parking improvements and the demolition of the old concession stand. Not included would be improvements to the old press box.

Phase two: Playing surface replacement, track replacement, lighting improvements, new bleachers, and storm water management plan. Core and Sitelogiq’s estimate for phase two is \$4.6 million dollars with contingencies and soft costs.

Phase three: New concessions, restrooms, ticketing, and asphalt at an estimate of \$1.1 million dollars with contingencies and soft costs.

Phase four: Fieldhouse, locker rooms, training room, support spaces, entrance gateway, and a concrete plaza at an estimate of \$3 million dollars with contingencies and soft costs.

Some of the physical challenges at the stadium include failing asphalt around concessions, exterior and interior fencing lifting out of ground, visitor bleachers need handrails and walkways, athletic field playing surface to eliminate non-contact injuries, and track surface. Right now, the track is not used for track meets, events, or competitions; it is only used for practices.

In November, I mentioned the reason I believe that we needed a vision is to improve the facilities. Our students currently have no home track meets and we transport for every track meet; our district is unable to host P.I.A.A. (*Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association*) playoff games for soccer and football because P.I.A.A. requires a host site to have turf surfaces; and we denied the request for Mainline Panther youth day due to concerns about the field conditions and the weather. In addition, we need to be prepared for the amount of practice space that is available when all athletic programs will be on one campus, so that we are able to manage for practices and competitions.

Some of the things that the facilities are used for include practice space, physical education classes, kindergarten graduation, Mainline youth programs, and also by community members.

How far we go with the vision is up to the Board, and how we approach it. I just want to share our direction in the vision that I have.

The district is currently taking on a \$49 million dollar project, and the state says that Penn Cambria School District is permitted to borrow up to \$55 million, so the district is maxed out on what we can borrow. That is why this remains a vision unless there are community buy-ins and support to make it happen.

Some community members have already offered to make donations towards this vision: Paul and Maureen Calandra - \$100,000, Rosebud Mining - \$100,000, and Leeward Energy (windmill) - \$10,000. We are a little shy of a quarter of a million dollars, but this is evidence that the community will invest in our school district.”

IX. ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

Joseph Smorto, Elementary Principal, explained how Mrs. Maria Zelenski, Kindergarten Teacher, earned the distinguished award of being named the Pennsylvania Association for Rural and Small Schools (PARSS) Teacher of the Year. “She will be receiving this award on May 1st at the PARSS Awards Ceremony. I would like to share with the board, along with the attendees of this meeting, the essay that I wrote as part of the nomination process:

*Compassion, flexibility, and dedication are qualities that describe a truly effective educator. Penn Cambria School District’s, Mrs. Maria Zelenski, is the epitome of these three attributes. Furthermore, she surpasses all expectations by being a teacher, leader, and a positive role model in our community. When I was made aware of the Educator of the Year Award from the Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools, I knew immediately that Mrs. Zelenski would be my nomination. **I am honored to officially nominate Mrs. Maria Zelenski, Kindergarten teacher at Penn Cambria School District, for the PARSS-Educator of the Year Award.***

Mrs. Zelenski taught at Penn Cambria School District for 31 years as a Kindergarten teacher. Throughout her years she served as grade level facilitator, social chair, and the Principal’s Advisory Committee. Additionally, she works as an instructor at our local dance company. She is a staple of Penn Cambria and our community! I met Mrs. Zelenski 15 years ago when I co-taught with her as the Autistic Support teacher. Right away I knew that she was, not only a genuine person, but she had endearing compassion for all students. She especially had a heart for students who were experiencing difficulties. Several years later I became her direct supervisor, as the principal. Her compassion continued to grow year after year. Last year, there was a student in her class experiencing severe emotional difficulties. There were several meltdowns and meetings with the family. Mrs. Zelenski implemented interventions and cared for this student like they were her own. At the end of the year, the parents wrote a post on social media commending Mrs. Zelenski and her efforts. They attributed their child’s success to her compassion and flexibility throughout the whole year.

As an educator flexibility is a must. However, Mrs. Zelenski takes this attribute to the next level. If students require additional assistance or extra accommodations, then she immediately implements a plan. Mrs. Conrad, the Special Education Director at Penn Cambria, stated that, “Mrs. Z. naturally provides an inclusive setting to include all children.” Amy Walters, parent of a high school senior who had her in kindergarten stated, “Mrs. Zelenski was an amazing kindergarten teacher for my son. She understands kids, and especially 5-year-old boys who are just having their first experience in the school setting. She was understanding to the jittery legs and taping pencils and crumbled up erasers that came as part of learning as my son was getting used to his new role as a student.” This is indicative of Mrs. Zelenski’s dedication and flexibility to her students and their needs.

Mrs. Zelenski’s dedication surpasses all expectations as an educator. Jordan Shedlock, high school senior, who had her in kindergarten stated, “I was scared to go to school, and I felt like I would be alone. The reason I started to enjoy going to school was Mrs. Zelenski. She was always there for me whenever I was having a hard time making new friends and talking to new people. One memory I will never forget is Mrs. Zelenski letting me sit in this special rocking chair because I was upset and wanted to go home, but that cheered me up enough to stay. She will always be one of my most memorable teachers and without her I don’t think I would’ve enjoyed going to school like I do now.” Mrs. Zelenski has unbelievable dedication to her students at school and in the community, as observed through her work at our community dance studio, organizing kindergarten graduation, and her countless hours of planning to meet all student needs.

In closing, it is my highest honor to nominate Mrs. Maria Zelenski as the PARSS-Educator of the Year. She demonstrates the utmost compassion, flexibility, and dedication that well exceeds our expectations. It

is truly a gift to have worked with her throughout my entire time at Penn Cambria. Our parents, community, and school district are very fortunate to have Mrs. Zelenski. She has and will continue to touch the lives of many students and community members.”